

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system for remotely determining the configuration of a computer of a multimedia content user, the system comprising:

 a delivery management server that sends a player detection script to the user's computer and receives configuration information from the user's computer.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein said player detection script comprises logic for a string search of mimetype and plugin arrays at the user's computer.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein said player detection script comprises logic for instantiation of an object for a media player.

4. The system of claim 1, wherein said player detection script comprises logic for querying a player to determine said player's version.

5. The system of claim 1, further comprising:
 server contact code for causing the user's computer to retrieve said player detection script from said delivery management server.

6. The system of claim 5, wherein said server contact code is embodied in a webpage sent by a content provider to the user's computer.

7. The system of claim 6, wherein said web page is developed by said content provider independently from a delivery management service associated with said delivery management server.

8. The system of claim 1, further comprising a preferences page sent to the user's computer by said delivery management server, wherein said preferences page comprises a user interface through which the user can indicate configuration information to said delivery management server.

9. The system of claim 8, wherein said user-indicated configuration information comprises identification of a connection speed.

10. The system of claim 8, wherein said user-indicated configuration comprises identification of a particular media player.

11. The system of claim 8, wherein said preferences page further comprises a server interface through which said delivery management server recommends a particular media player.

12. The system of claim 8, wherein said preferences page is developed by said content provider independently of a delivery management service associated with said delivery management server.

13. The system of claim 8, wherein said preferences page includes a timing block of predetermined size.

14. The system of claim 1, wherein said delivery management server operates as part of a delivery management service that is upgradable independent of any content provider.

15. A method of remotely determining the configuration of a computer of a multimedia content user, comprising the steps of:

(a) sending player detection code to the user's computer; and

(b) receiving configuration information regarding the user's computer.

16. The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of:

(c) setting a cookie at the user's computer to a domain of a delivery management server, performed before said step (b), and wherein the configuration information of said step (b) is received in the cookie.

17. A method of conveying, to a delivery management server, the configuration of a computer of a multimedia content user, comprising the steps of:

(a) receiving server contact code;
(b) executing the server contact code, to fetch player detection code from the delivery management server;
(c) executing the player detection code, to determine configuration information;
(d) storing the configuration information; and
(e) sending the configuration information to the delivery management server.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the server contact code of said step (a) is received in a web page sent by a content provider.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein said step (b) is performed as a result of an action by the user.

20. The method of claim 17, wherein said step (c) comprises performing a string search through a mimetype array in the user's computer, to identify character strings indicative of one or more media players.

21. The method of claim 17, wherein said step (c) comprises performing a string search through a plugin array in the user's computer, to identify character strings indicative of one or more media players.

22. The method of claim 17, wherein said step (c) comprises attempting to instantiate a media player object to determine the presence of the media player.

23. The method of claim 17, wherein said step (d) comprises storing the configuration information in one or more cookies.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein said step (e) comprises sending the cookies to the delivery management server.

25. The method of claim 23, wherein said step (d) comprises setting a cookie at the user's computer to a domain of the delivery management server.

26. A method of remotely determining the configuration of a computer of a multimedia content user, comprising the steps of:

- (a) sending a preferences page to the user's computer; and
- (b) receiving configuration information regarding the user's computer.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein a recommended media player is identified to the user through the preferences page.

28. A method of conveying, to a delivery management server, the configuration of a computer of a multimedia user, comprising the steps of:

- (a) receiving a preferences page;

(b) receiving configuration information from the user through a user interface in the preferences page;

(c) storing the configuration information; and

(d) sending the configuration information to the delivery management server.

29. The method of claim 28, further comprising the step of:

(e) conveying the identity of a recommended media player to the user.

30. The method of claim 28, wherein the configuration information comprises the identity of a particular media player.

31. The method of claim 28, wherein the configuration information comprises identification of a connection speed.

32. A method of determining a connection speed of a computer, comprising the steps of:

(a) receiving a timing block of data having a known size;

(b) marking the time at which transfer of the timing block begins;

(c) marking the time at which transfer of the timing block ends; and

(d) determining the connection speed based on the size of the timing block and the times at which transfer begins and ends.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein the timing block is received, in step (a), in a hypertext markup language (HTML) comment as part of a preferences page.

34. The method of claim 32, further comprising the step of:
 - (e) storing the connection speed in a cookie.
35. The method of claim 34, further comprising the step of:
 - (f) sending the cookie to a delivery management server.
36. A method of setting a cookie at a user's computer, comprising the steps of:
 - (a) receiving a hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP) request for a cookie set script; and
 - (b) sending a set-cookie: header to the user's computer.
37. A method of setting a cookie at a user's computer, comprising the steps of:
 - (a) building a uniform resource locator (URL) to a cookie set script at a delivery management server;
 - (b) making a hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP) request for the cookie set script; and
 - (c) receiving a set-cookie header from the delivery management server.
38. The method of claim 37, further comprising the step of:
 - (d) creating a dummy image object, performed after step (a) and before step (b).
39. A computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied in said medium for causing an application program to execute on a delivery management server that remotely determines the configuration of a computer of a multimedia content user, said computer readable program code means comprising:

(a) computer readable program code means for causing the delivery management server to send a player detection code to the user's computer; and

(b) computer readable program code means for causing the delivery management server to receive configuration information regarding the user's computer.

40. A computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied in said medium for causing an application program to execute on a computer of a multimedia content user, wherein the computer conveys, to a delivery management server, the configuration of the user's computer, said computer readable program code means comprising:

(a) computer readable program code means for causing the user's computer to receive server contact code;

(b) computer readable program code means for causing the user's computer to execute the server contact code, to fetch player detection code from the delivery management server;

(c) computer readable program code means for causing the user's computer to execute the player detection code, to determine configuration information;

(d) computer readable program code means for causing the user's computer to store the configuration information; and

(e) computer readable program code means for causing the user's computer to send the configuration information to the delivery management server.

41. A computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied in said medium for causing an application program to execute on a delivery management

server that remotely determines the configuration of a computer of a multimedia content user, said computer readable program code means comprising:

(a) computer readable program code means for causing the delivery management server to send a preferences page to the user's computer; and

(b) computer readable program code means for causing the delivery management server to receive configuration information regarding the user's computer.

42. A computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied in said medium for causing an application program to execute on a computer of a multimedia user, wherein the user's computer conveys, to a delivery management server, the configuration of the user's computer, said computer readable program code means comprising:

(a) computer readable program code means for causing the user's computer to receive a preferences page;

(b) computer readable program code means for causing the user's computer to receive configuration information from the user through a user interface in the preferences page;

(c) computer readable program code means for causing the user's computer to store the configuration; and

(d) computer readable program code means for causing the user's computer to send the configuration information to the delivery management server.

43. A computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied in said medium for causing an application program to execute on a computer that

determines its connection speed, said computer readable program code means comprising:

- (a) computer readable program code means for causing the computer to receive a timing block of data having a known size;
- (b) computer readable program code means for causing the computer to mark the time at which transfer of the timing block begins;
- (c) computer readable program code means for causing the computer to mark the time at which transfer of the timing block ends; and
- (d) computer readable program code means for causing the computer to determine the connection speed based on the size of the timing block and the times at which transfer begins and ends.

44. A computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied in said medium for causing an application program to execute on a delivery management server that sets a cookie at a user's computer, said computer readable program code means comprising:

- (a) computer readable program code means for causing the delivery management server to receive a hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP) request for a cookie set script; and
- (b) computer readable program code means for causing the delivery management server to send a set-cookie header to the user's computer.

45. A computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied in said medium for causing an application program to execute on a computer that sets a cookie at the computer, said computer readable program code means comprising:

- (a) computer readable program code means for causing the computer to build a uniform resource locator (URL) to a cookie set script at a delivery management server;

- (b) computer readable program code means for causing the computer to make a hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP) request for the cookie set script; and
- (c) computer readable program code means for causing the computer to receive a set-cookie header.

46. The computer program product of claim 45, wherein said code means (b) comprises computer readable code means for causing the computer to create a dummy image object.